

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

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NEW BOOK

CPYRGHT (PARTICIPANTS WERE SHOWN IN MEDIUM CLOSEUP SHOTS.)

MARIO MACHADO: The CIA may be one of the world's most secret intelligence operations, but it wasn't always that way. There is a new book out about the origins of the CIA and its freewheeling predecessor: the World War II OSS, including their activities in Indo-China. R. Harris Smith wrote the book and he's here to tell us about it.

I was fascinated last night, reading this thing; so many interesting highlights. Of their career, the OSS, when it was in existence, where do you think they were their most effective?

R. HARRIS SMITH: I think probably in Europe at the time of the cross channel invasion, they were very effective in getting information from the French Resistance to Eisenhower.

MACHADO: You mentioned to me offstage that the Dulles, Alan Dulles, who was head of the overseas or European operation was the most, the best agent that we had. Yet it seemed from reading the book, he sat in a hotel room in Switzerland, how did he get all this information?

SMITH: Well, Switzerland was a hotbed of espionage at the time and his great coup was to find a man in Hitler's own foreign office who was so anti-Nazi that he was willing to give literally hundreds of German documents to Dulles.

MACHADO: Most of the coverage here deals with Europe and then of course with Viet Nam and some in China; very little is said about Japan. Did we have an OSS operation in Japan at all?

SMITH: The problem was that General MacArthur did not care to have OSS operating in his theater, just as he didn't care to have the CIA operating in Korea, later.

MACHADO: Interestingly also is that the pictures that you have, -- every OSS man that I saw, -- they were all parachuters, it looks like.